SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress		January 25, 1995, 11:51 a.m.
1st Session	**Vote No. 43**	Page S-1495 Temp. Record

UNFUNDED MANDATES/Deficit Reduction Efforts

SUBJECT: **Unfunded Mandate Reform Act of 1995 . . . S. 1. Craig motion to table the Wellstone amendment No. 185.**

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 54-45

SYNOPSIS: Pertinent votes on this legislation include Nos. 15-41, 44-45, and 47-61.

As reported by the Governmental Affairs Committee and the Budget Committee, S. 1, the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act of 1995, will create 2 majority (51-vote) points of order in the Senate. The first will lie against the consideration of a bill or joint resolution reported by an authorizing committee if it contains mandates and if Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cost estimates on those mandates are unavailable. The second point of order will lie against the consideration of a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, or conference report that will cause the total cost of unfunded intergovernmental mandates in the legislation to exceed $50 million.

The Wellstone amendment would add the following, "It is the sense of the Congress that the Congress shall continue its progress at reducing the annual Federal deficit and, when the Congress proposes to the States a balanced-budget amendment, must accompany it with financial information on its impact on the budget of each of the States."

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Craig moved to table the Wellstone amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

NOTE: A Wellstone second-degree amendment that contained identical text as the Wellstone first-degree amendment automatically fell when the first-degree amendment was tabled.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

The Wellstone amendment would require the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to do a budgetary analysis of 50 State budgets and thousands of Federal programs that are individually tailored to those State budgets to determine how proposed changes in the Federal budget over the next 7 years will impact each State. Do our colleagues really imagine this requirement is possible? Further,

(See other side)

YEAS (54)			NAYS (45)			NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (52 or 100%)		**Democrats (2 or 4%)**	**Republicans (0 or 0%)**	**Democrats (45 or 96%)**		**Republicans (1)**	**Democrats (0)**
Abraham	Hutchison	Kohl		Akaka	Heflin	Simpson-[4AY]	
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Simon		Baucus	Hollings		
Bennett	Jeffords			Biden	Inouye		
Bond	Kassebaum			Bingaman	Johnston		
Brown	Kempthorne			Boxer	Kennedy		
Burns	Kyl			Bradley	Kerrey		
Chafee	Lott			Breaux	Kerry		
Coats	Lugar			Bryan	Lautenberg		
Cochran	Mack			Bumpers	Leahy		
Cohen	McCain			Byrd	Levin		
Coverdell	McConnell			Campbell	Lieberman		
Craig	Murkowski			Conrad	Mikulski		
D'Amato	Nickles			Daschle	Moseley-Braun		
DeWine	Packwood			Dodd	Moynihan		
Dole	Pressler			Dorgan	Murray		
Domenici	Roth			Exon	Nunn		
Faircloth	Santorum			Feingold	Pell		
Frist	Shelby			Feinstein	Pryor		
Gorton	Smith			Ford	Reid		
Gramm	Snowe			Glenn	Robb		
Grams	Specter			Graham	Rockefeller		
Grassley	Stevens			Harkin	Sarbanes		
Gregg	Thomas				Wellstone		
Hatch	Thompson						
Hatfield	Thurmond						
Helms	Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:
1—Official Buisiness
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:
AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

why were this amendment's supporters, many of whom have been around here for many years, not concerned with measuring the effects on State budgets of all the laws and mandates that have been imposed by the Federal Government in the last 30 years? In all candor, we think State and local governments will find the effects of a shrinking Federal Government to be far more beneficial than the growing monster of recent decades.

The obvious intent of this amendment's sponsors is to try to build opposition to the balanced budget amendment. They are convinced that States would not want to hear of declining Federal services. They also seem to reject the advice of financial experts, all of whom say that passage of a balanced budget amendment would cause immediately lower interest rates that would greatly improve the financial situation for all levels of government. Their hope is to scare State governments into voting against ratification. We doubt that their scare-mongering would succeed if this amendment were to pass, but if it were to work, the result would be to ruin our economy. The United States is near the point at which nations have historically dealt with their debt by monetizing it. If we allow that to happen, our country will suffer economic ruin. We hope our colleagues are not so wedded to their social spending now that they are willing to sacrifice the welfare of future generations by refusing to exercise spending restraint.

The unfortunate truth of the matter is that Congress has failed miserably in every effort it has made to bring deficit spending under control. For the past 3 decades it has been on an uncontrollable spending spree, the Wellstone amendment's self-congratulatory pat-on-the-back for reducing the deficit notwithstanding. Occasionally slowing the descent into bankruptcy cannot be called progress. The most pathetic attempt in recent years was the 1993 tax hike package, which enacted the largest tax hike in history, promised spending cuts in the hazy future, and did not even offer any hope of balancing the budget in the out-years. Instead, it was a plan to lower projected deficits for a few years through the use of tax hikes and creative accounting, and to allow uncontrolled deficits in the future. For the first time, Congress enacted a multi-year plan to solve the deficit problem that planned for long-term bankruptcy.

In a few days the Senate will turn to consideration of a balanced budget amendment. At that time, the offering of this amendment will be appropriate. If it is offered again, on that resolution on which it belongs, we will vote to table it, just as we will vote to table it on this unrelated bill.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The bill before us is about unfunded mandates. In a few days, Congress will consider, and send to the States for their consideration, the biggest unfunded mandate of all time--a balanced budget constitutional amendment. That amendment will have enormous, catastrophic consequences for the States if it is passed. As the Governor of Vermont has stated, it may simply result in a huge transfer of responsibility for government functions from the Federal Government to the States. To bring the Federal budget into balance would require enormous spending cuts and enormous tax increases. The States have a right to know what Congress intends to do if they ratify this amendment--will they alone then be responsible for providing social services? Who exactly is going to be hurt? We know that our colleague in the House, Representative Armey, said that providing the details now would doom passage of the balanced budget amendment because it would make Member's knees buckle. We also know that the conservative Republican leadership in Congress has no intention of cutting defense or increasing taxes. If Congress does not raise taxes or cut defense, it is going to have to cut, and cut drastically, social program spending and/or entitlement spending. Entitlement spending covers mostly health care and retirement benefits, neither of which we favor cutting at all. Additionally, our colleagues are well aware that we favor increased social spending. Thus, we imagine that Representative Armey is right--if he gave us the details, we imagine our knees would buckle.

We imagine the knees of most Americans would buckle as well. Those Americans who voted for Republicans on the basis of the Contract with America did not vote for a secret plan to dismantle the Federal Government and to force the States to pick up the pieces. If our Republican colleagues have such a plan, they should put it forth, so States can make a rational decision either for or against the balanced budget amendment. The Wellstone amendment embodies this principle, and thus merits our approval.